

## **Mayor Copenhaver's Speech At The Xethanol Press Conference.**

First of all, I would like to thank everyone for joining us on what is no doubt a historic day for Augusta. Today, our community is blessed to welcome Coastal Xethanol as our newest corporate citizen. As our entire community looks towards a prosperous future in which opportunity abounds for all citizens, this announcement stands as an answer to the prayers of many while also serving to provide us with a glimpse of our City's future economy.

Much has been made about our nations need to move away from a reliance on foreign oil. Coastal Xethanol fundamentally understands this need and has answered the call to push forward with a focus on bio-fuel production. By selecting Augusta as the home to their newest production facility, they have placed our City in a position to become a national leader in bio-fuel production and technology. As the disturbing trend of manufacturing jobs moving overseas continues, there is an immediate need for Augusta to diversify our economy and today's announcement is a strong step in that direction.

In welcoming Coastal Xethanol as our newest community partner, I would also like to thank them for the contributions they have already made to our City. Today, we are also honored to have on hand representatives of Heritage Academy. As you look around at these children, the future leaders of our City, please know that Coastal Xethanol has already stepped forward to make a positive impact on their lives by donating all of their surplus computers and printers to the school. Now that definitely deserves a round of applause!!

As the former Executive Director of the Central Savannah River Land Trust, I am also pleased to announce that our newest community partner has also offered to grant the land trust a conservation easement on ten acres of pristine riverfront property which will permanently protect the property in perpetuity. Gentleman, as Augusta's first green Mayor, I applaud you for your commitment to protecting our community's greenspace.

In closing, I would like to say that bringing this announcement to fruition was definitely a team effort. From the day that a private citizen, my friend Chris Hitchcock, first contacted my office about setting up a meeting, through negotiations with the Development Authority of Richmond County and with the help of Planning and Zoning, the Georgia Department of Economic Development and Georgia Power, everyone involved in this effort has worked tirelessly to make this day possible. Thanks to all of you as you have shown just what can be done when we all work together to move our community forward!! Before I turn over the podium, I would also like to personally thank Karyn Nixon, my Executive Assistant, who has worked countless long hours to make this deal happen. Great job Karyn!

Once again, thanks to you all for being here to celebrate a new day in Augusta!